

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AGR-20 ISO-00 AF-10 ARA-16 EA-11 EUR-25 NEA-10

RSC-01 IOE-00 OIC-04 AID-20 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11

FRB-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 SPC-03

CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-10 SS-20 STR-08

CEA-02 L-03 H-03 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15 SPM-01 HEW-08

DRC-01 /263 W

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P R 241140Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2015

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

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FODAG

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AORG, EAGR, FAO

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SUBJECT: FAO CONFERENCE RESOLUTION ON WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE

FROM USDEL TO FAO CONFERENCE

REF: A. STATE 222510; B. ROME 12867

1. SUMMARY: THE FAO 17TH CONFERENCE ADOPTED A REPORT NOVEMBER 23 TO BE TRANSMITTED TO ECOSOC FOR ITS DISCUSSIONS ON THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE BEGINNING NEXT WEEK. THIS CAME ONLY AFTER A BATTLE BETWEEN DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES OVER THE ISSUES OF THE EXTENT OF COMMITMENTS TO BE ENTERED INTO AT A WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE (WFC) AND WHETHER THE WFC SHOULD EXTEND TO THE AREA OF TRADE. THE REPORT, WHICH ALL PARTIES AGREED SHOULD BE JOINTLY AGREED AND WITHOUT RESERVATION BY ANY DELEGATION IN ORDER TO EMPHASIZE THE UNITED POSITION OF FAO MEMBERS THAT THE ORGANIZATION SHOULD PLAY A LEADING ROLE IN THE WFC, WAS A COMPROMISE AND NOT WHOLLY SATISFACTORY TO ANY DELEGATION. AN EPISODE THURSDAY EVENING, WHEN LDC'S DISPUTED AN "OBSERVATION" BY THE FRENCH DELEGATION ON THE AGREED TEXT WHICH STATED THAT "A CERTAIN NUMBER OF COUNTRIES" (READ DEVELOPED, AND INCLUDING THE U.S.) CONSIDERED THAT TRADE SHOULD NOT BE THE CENTERPIECE OF THE CONFERENCE, WAS ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE DIVISION BETWEEN LDC'S AND DC'S. END SUMMARY.

2. THE FAO CONFERENCE AGREED NOVEMBER 23 ON A REPORT TO ECOSOC ON WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE FOR USE BY ECOSOC IN ITS DISCUSSIONS BEGINNING NOVEMBER 26 ON THE SUBJECT (TEXT SENT SEPTTEL). THIS TEXT WAS THE SUBJECT OF NUMEROUS COMPROMISES, SINCE ALL PARTIES, AND IN PARTICULAR THE FAO SECRETARIAT, WISHED TO AVOID A DOCUMENT WHICH WOULD LEAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE FAO WAS UNABLE TO SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE AND THUS UNQUALIFIED TO PLAY THE MAJOR ROLE IN THE WFC. THUS, THE USUAL FAO FORMULA OF "SOME NATIONS FELT THAT" SUCH-AND-SUCH, "WHILE OTHERS FELT "SO-AND-SO WAS REJECTED BY ALL BUT THE FRENCH DELEGATION, WHICH WAS EVENTUALLY PERSUADED BY OTHERS TO AGREE.

3. THE TWO MAJOR ISSUES PROVOKED BY THE DRAFT WERE THOSE OF THE EXTENT OF COMMITMENTS TO BE ENTERED INTO AT THE WFC, AND WHAT SUBJECT MATTER THE WFC SHOULD COVER. ON FIRST POINT, AND AFTER MUCH DEBATE ON FLOOR (SEE REFTTEL B) AND IN THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE, THE FOLLOWING COMPROMISE SENTENCE WAS AGREED: " THE PRINCIPAL TASK OF THE WFC, ON WHICH MOST OF ITS EFFORTS SHOULD BE FOCUSED, SHOULD BE TO BRING ABOUT A COMMITMENT BY THE WORLD COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UNDERTAKE CONCRETE ACTION TOWARDS RESOLVING THE WORLD FOOD PROBLEM WITHIN THE WIDER CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS." THIS WORDING SATISFIED THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, WHICH WERE SEEKING A "COMMITMENT",

WITHOUT AT THE SAME TIME SUGGESTING ANY BINDING NATIONAL COMMITMENTS.

4. THE SECOND ISSUE WAS THAT OF THE ROLE OF TRADE IN THE WFC. HERE, THE TEXT OF THE REPORT NOTES THAT "WHILE THE WFP WAS NOT

ENVISAGED AS A NEGOTIATING FORUM, IT SHOULD NEVERTHELESS AIM AT REACHING AGREEMENT ON SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAMS, WHICH WOULD SUBSEQUENTLY BE CARRIES OUT THROUGH EXISTING MACHINERY. THIS ROLE WAS PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT IN THE AREA OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL ADJUSTMENT, SINCE QUESTIONS OF TRADE AND FOOD BALANCES WERE HIGHLY INTERLINKED." THE LATTER PART OF SECOND SENTENCE COMES DIRECTLY FROM TEXT OF SECRETARY BUTZ' STATEMENT TO FAO CONFERENCE ON NOVEMBER 13.

5. A MAJOR STORM DEVELOPED WHEN THE REPORT AS PREPARED BY DRAFTING COMMITTEE WAS DEBATED ON THE FLOOR OF COMMISSION IM ALTHOUGH NO DELEGATION WAS ENTIRELY SATISFIED WITH THE REPORT, IT WAS AGREED BY VIRTUALLY ALL DELEGATIONS THAT NO AMENDMENTS OR RESERVATIONS WOULD BE PRESENTED ON THE FLOOR. FRENCH DELEGATION, HOWEVER, CONDITIONED THEIR APPROVAL ON A CLARIFYING "OBSERVATION" ON TRADE FOR WHICH THEY OBTAINED APPROVAL FROM ALL OTHER EC DELEGATIONS, AND WHICH JAPAN,

CANADA, US, SWEDEN, FINLAND AND NORWAY ALSO SUPPORTED. TEXT OF "OBSERVATION" WAS AS FOLLOWS: "THE FRENCH DELEGATION IS AUTHORIZED BY A CERTAIN NUMBER OF STATES TO PRESENT THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATION: THESE STATES CONSIDER THAT THE WFC SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON FOOD PROBLEMS, IN PARTICULAR THOSE CONCERNING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND FOOD AID, WITHOUT GIVING TO TRADE QUESTIONS, WHICH ARE RELATED TO THEM AND WHICH ARE FURTHERMORE DEALT WITH IN OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, A PLACE WHICH DOES NOT CORRESPOND TO THE FUNDAMENTAL ACTIVITY OF SAID CONFERENCE." THIS "OBSERVATION", PRESENTED AFTER THE COMMITTEE HAD APPROVED THE TEXT OF THE REPORT, BROUGHT FORTH ANGRY REJOINDERS FROM MANY LDC'S, WHO SAID THAT IT REPRESENTED IN EFFECT A RESERVATION BY THE FIFTEEN STATES ON THE TEXT JUST AGREED. DC'S COUNTERED THAT IT WAS NOT A RESERVATION, BUT MERELY A REMINDER OF THE POSITION ALREADY TAKEN IN COMMISSION I AND STATEMENTS BY AGRICULTURE MINISTERS DURING EARLIER DISCUSSIONS. AT THAT POINT, TENUOUS AGREEMENT ON TEXT SEEMED LIKELY TO BREAK DOWN.
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6. USDEL CONCLUDED THAT FRENCH MUST BE PERSUADED TO WITHDRAW "OBSERVATION" OR FIND ANOTHER SATISFACTORY COMPROMISE FORMULA TO MOLLIFY LDC'S. ACCORDINGLY ON NOVEMBER 23 US REQUESTED CAUCUS OF 15 COUNTRIES JOINING IN OBSERVATION. AT MEETING CHAIRED BY US, FRENCH INFORMED GROUP THEY NOT PREPARED TO WITHDRAW "OBSERVATION." THEY HAD BEEN IN CONTACT WITH SECRETARIAT, HOWEVER, AND HAD AGREED

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

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TO MAKE CONCILIATORY STATEMENT IN PLENARY (1) EMPHASIZING THAT THEY
AGREED TO REPORT AND HAD NO RESERVATIONS AND (2) IN ORDER THAT
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THERE BE NO DOUBT THEY WOULD PROPOSE THAT VERBATIM RECORDS WHICH
COMMISSION I HAD DECIDED TO SEND TO NEW YORK TOGETHER WITH THE

REPORT SHOULD BE LIMITED TO SUBSTANTIVE DEBATES OF NOVEMBER 19 AND 20. FRENCH INDICATED KEY NON-ALIGNED LEADERS HAD AGREED TO THIS FACE-SAVING FORMULA. THIS WAS CONFIRMED BY NOTE FROM DG'S OFFICE INFORMING CHAIRMAN THAT KEY LDC DELS HAD AGREED TO FORMULA AND THERE MIGHT BE NO NEED TO HOLD MEETING WHICH HE HAD SCHEDULED WITH 15 COUNTRIES.

7. GROUP AGREED THAT FRENCH WOULD SPEAK FOR ALL 15 DELS, BUT OTHER COUNTRIES COULD NOT BE IDENTIFIED (THIS DUE TO DUTCH RELUCTANCE TO BE IDENTIFIED AGAIN WITH ORIGINAL RESOLUTION), AND THAT US WOULD FOLLOW WITH CONCILIATORY GENERAL STATEMENT. GROUP ASKED THAT US CHAIRMAN INFORM DG OF DECISION AND KEEP GROUP POSTED ON ANY LATE DEVELOPMENTS. MEETING WITH DG CONFIRMED THAT SECRETARIAT HAD SALVAGE OPERATION WELL IN HAND, INCLUDING PREPARED STATEMENTS FOR PLENARY AND COMMISSION I CHAIRMEN TO FACILITATE ADOPTION OF REPORT.

8. PLENARY SESSION TOOK PLACE WITHOUT A HITCH. AFTER STATEMENTS BY FRANCE AND US, COLOMBIA DEL (BULA HOYOS, PERMANENT CHAIRMAN ELECT OF FAO COUNCIL), MADE STATEMENT ACCEPTING FRENCH STATEMENT IN GOOD GRACE, INDICATING HE WOULD REGRET PREVIOUS DAY'S EXPERIENCE BEING REPEATED IN NEW YORK, AND URGING GOVERNMENTS TO DO WHAT THEY COULD TO AVOID THIS. REPORT THEN ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY.

9. DG BOERMA EXPRESSED GREAT SATISFACTION THAT REPORT, WHICH WOULD GIVE UN CLEAR GUIDANCE, WAS UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED. HE SAID WFC IS A GREAT CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY, PROVIDED IT EXPRESSES POLITICAL WILL OF GOVERNMENTS TO PUT AN END TO HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION. WFC WILL HAVE HUMANITARIAN, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ASPECTS - THAT WAS REASON FOR DIFFICULTY IN ARRIVING AT A COMPROMISE. ALTHOUGH DISCUSSION IN NEW YORK WOULD BE COMPLICATED, HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT SPIRIT OF COMPROMISE WOULD PREVAIL THERE ALSO, AND SAID HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE NECESSARY POLITICAL WILL EXISTS IN THE WORLD TO MAKE THE WFC A SUCCESS.

COMMENT: FAO MEETING ON WFC CLEARLY CONFIRMS THAT THE LDC'S VIEW THE CONFERENCE AS ONE DEDICATED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY TO THEIR OWN PROBLEMS AND ONE IN WHICH THE CENTRAL FOCUS MUST BE TRADE, WITH THE COMMITMENTS TO BE OBTAINED AT THE CONFERENCE AS BINDING AS POSSIBLE. IT ALSO SHOWS THE SENSITIVITY OF DEVELOPED COUNTRIES ON THE TRADE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ISSUE AND THEIR DESIRE TO AVOID ANY ACTIONS AT THE WFC WHICH MIGHT PREJUDICE THE MTN. WE CAN EXPECT BOTH OF THESE ISSUES TO CONTINUE TO BE CONTENTIOUS AS PREPARATIONS FOR THE WFC DEVELOP FURTHER. OUR DISCUSSIONS WITHIN THE DEVELOPED GROUP ALSO SHOWED THAT JAPAN, AND IN PARTICULAR FRANCE, ARE RELUCTANT TO SEE THE FAO'S PROPOSALS FOR AGRICULTURAL ADJUSTMENT TAKEN UP AT THE WFC. FINALLY, THE DELEGATION OF THE PRC WAS ALMOST TOTALLY SILENT (EXCEPT FOR THEIR STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE ALGIERS DECLARATION), BUT PRESUMABLY THEIR LACK OF OBJECTION TO PASSAGE OF THE REPORT INDICATES PRC WILLINGNESS TO PAR-

TICIPATE IN THE WFC. VOLPE

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